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ABSTRACT

A broad range of literature on staff development, an important component of intensive English programs (IEPs) is reviewed, and an interactive staff development model is proposed. The model calls for three layers of staff as defined in TESOL's Statement of Core Standards--Administrative, Instructional, and Support--that may mutually enhance one another's professional growth. Four assumptions are questioned: (1) staff development has as its first goal the promotion of institutional effectiveness, not the individual's career advancement; (2) staff development requires a specialist; (3) staff development means inservice training and has a structured program; and (4) staff development is something done for subordinates. The interactive model includes the following components: performance review, indirect review, demonstrations, task collaboration, modeling, and specialized tasks. Examples of reciprocal behaviors and activities are provided from one person's experience in establishing an IEP during the past 3 years. Contains 12 references. (LB)

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A Model for Effective Staff Development

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Abstract

Staff development, an important component in IEP administration, is as yet little discussed within the field and inadequately defined. This paper reviews a broad range of literature on the subject and proposes an interactive model of staff development, in which the three layers of staff as defined in TESOL's Statement of Core Standards--Administrative, Instructional, and Support--may mutually enhance one another's professional growth. Examples of reciprocal behaviors and activities are provided from the writer's experience in establishing an IEP during the past three years.

Increasing interest has been demonstrated over the past few years in the problems and requirements of administering intensive English programs (IEPs). Much attention has been given to evaluating such programs, in papers given at TESOL conventions (e.g., Sawyer: 1991) and in Pennington's volume, Building Better English Language Programs (1991). Staczek (1991) has also addressed the need for better preparation of students in master's programs for the many administrative facets of IEP administration. Very little attention has been directly paid, however, to staff development policies and procedures within the IEP, although the time is surely come when we can speak hopefully of professional growth and ESL career tracks.

In this paper, which draws on my own experience in establishing an IEP as well as the resources of the literature, I will propose an interactive model of staff development. The first task is to try to give the term some definition, for it means various things to various informants. The concept of staff development evolved perhaps a quarter-century ago in industry, where it seems to have been considered almost synonymous with organizational development or corporate well-being. It was taken up enthusiastically by educational theorists, who equated it with inservice training. It then acquired a large number of interpretations, from improved means of communication to a lecture series, and even to an effective grievance procedure. To

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further confuse matters, the burgeoning human resource development field occasionally uses the term to describe what HRD professionals do.

Fortunately, TESOL itself has now published a descriptive definition of what it terms "professional staff development" in its statement of core standards. The paragraph is worth quoting in full:

> A quality program actively supports and engages in continuing staff development for all employees. There is continuous, ongoing inservice training, using a range of learning modes and combinations, conducted by members of the regular staff as well as by invited trainers from outside. There is support, financial and other, for membership in professional organizations, for attendance at workshops and conferences, and for participation in various capacities in professional activities outside the workplace. The program, upon consultation with all concerned, engages in and/or encourages research on various aspects of ELT by staff in collaboration. (Committee on Professional Standards 1992:11)

This statement improves on those coming from other informants in industry and in the wider education community. The latter formulations tend to cohere around four assumptions that may be questioned from the IEP perspective:

•*Assumption 1: Staff development has as its first goal the promotion of institutional effectiveness, not the individual's career advancement.* Used as it often is to reflect training or improved communications, the term "staff development" seems in the wider literature to speak more to the well-being of the organization than to that of individual employees. Most writers treat the group of workers whose "staff development" they are reporting as a static category. For example, Kozoll *et al.* (1980), writing about adjunct faculty members at community colleges, reported that their staff development needs were somehow eased by enhanced communication, inasmuch as they "will not or cannot be employed on a full-time basis" (354); that is, they could grow professionally but only within their structural niche. Many ESL teachers are "adjunct faculty members" at community colleges and elsewhere, of course, and they seek career enhancement. The words "staff development" surely connote self-transcendence: employees seeking to widen their experience and to advance. Thus, the term as used here has much more to do with professional growth than with institutional productiveness, although it is apparent that the one enhances

the other (see, e.g., Matthies: 1991).

•*Assumption 2: Staff development requires a specialist.* As presented in the literature, staff development is something consultants or "specialists in instructional development" (Rhodes and Hounsell: 1980) do; at least, someone has to devote full-time energy to it. Many of the writings come from Canadian, Australian, and American observers of public schools--huge organisms where role specialization is possible; and even those writing of higher education refer to faculty resource centers. In ESL programs, by contrast, the administrative staffs are jacks and jills of all trades, who must contemplate staff development while still carrying out marketing, administrative, and instructional functions. This is the way it should be, according to the model developed here.

•*Assumption 3: Staff development means inservice training and has a structured program.* Like the TESOL statement, most informants equate staff development with inservice training, workshops, and conferences. A few perceptive commentators state that, rather, it should be considered a process and not just events or a series of events. Bents and Howey (1981), who trace the concept of staff development through adult psychology and back to Freud, speak often of continuous individual growth through the levels of cognitive development. Yet they too assume that the process is carefully structured: the less mature the individual, they write, the greater the structure needed; activities for young teachers need to be "clearly organized." In this view, the staff development program at my IEP would consist solely of the day we set aside for that purpose once each term and the support we provide our staff for conference presentations and professional memberships. Yet surely, that is only a part of the process. In the conception developed here, staff development can consist of many non-events, like attitudes and the delegation of responsibilities; it goes on every day.

Assumption 4: Staff development is something done for subordinates. There is agreement among writers on the subject--not shared by the TESOL Committee on Professional Standards--that staff development, whatever it may mean, is a top-down affair. Even when it is equated with career development, it is said to be organized and shaped by management. White et al. (1991: 61-96), virtually the only informants to address the topic at some length in the context of intensive English language programs, exemplify this attitude. They set up six activities as comprising staff development: training, performance reviews, lesson observations, career counselling,

discipline, and dismissal. Of course, a teacher might benefit professionally from being dismissed, but in any case, the implication is that only instructors and support personnel require staff development: The program directors and coordinators have arrived at the top and need worry no more about personal growth.

Thus the definition of staff development in this paper is taken another step: It is professional growth for everyone on the ESL staff and it proceeds from the bottom up as well as from the top down. Obviously, the directors and heads must approve the concept and set the tone if any staff development process is to work, but by the very nature of our highly experimental, low status, and revenue-driven profession, directors also need to broaden their horizons and to learn from their staffs. This paper proposes, in short, an interactive model of staff development.

The starting point for the model comes from management theorists. Thompson et al. (1986) set up a four-stage career path with descriptive characteristics of each stage (Figure 1). The argument they state, in brief, is that professional employees must identify their stages and discuss with supervisors what they need in order to stay productive; note again the theme of institutional efficiency. Examining the "Characteristics of Career Stages" closely, we can visualize the chart as a template fitting reasonably well over an ESL program. At least, in my program, there are young professionals or pre-professionals (Stage 1) exercising directed creativity; the instructors (Stage 2), working independently; the senior staff (Stage 3), making significant technical contributions; and somewhat tenuously, the director (Stage 4) mapping the organization's environment and exercising formal power.

Here we will work with three stages, in keeping with TESOL's own divisions; in the statement of "Core Standards," previously quoted, the Committee on Professional Standards delineates program organization structure as falling into three categories: Administration, Instructional Staff, and Support Staff. We may well believe that there isn't a Stage IV yet in ESL. What do program directors go on to? There must be someplace; but it appears that they rarely become full professors in English or linguistics faculties or graduate to deanships. They don't turn into CEOs in the Fortune 500 or get summoned to the White House to serve as presidential advisors. All this may change in time, but today, the stereotypical program director is a youngish new Ph.D in search of a career.

Figure 1:

Characteristics of Career Stages

Stage I

Works under the supervision and direction of a more senior professional in the field.

Work is never entirely his or her own, but assignments are given that are a portion of a larger project or activity being overseen by a senior professional.

Lacks experience and status in organization.

Is expected to willingly accept supervision and direction.

Is expected to do most of the detailed and routine work on a project.

Is expected to exercise "directed" creativity and initiative.

Learns to perform well under pressure and accomplish a task within the time budgeted.

Stage II

Goes into depth in one problem or technical area.

Assumes responsibility for a definable portion of the project, process, or clients.

Works independently and produces significant results.

Develops credibility and a reputation.

Relies less on supervisor or mentor for answers, develops more of his or her own resources to solve problems.

Increases in confidence and ability.

Stage III

Is involved enough in his or her own work to make significant technical contributions but begins working in more than one area.

Greater breadth of technical skills and application of those skills.

Stimulates others through ideas and information.

Involved in developing people in one or more of the following ways:
- Acts as an idea leader for a small group.
- Serves as a mentor to younger professionals.
- Assumes a formal supervisory position.

Deals with the outside to benefit others in organizations – i.e., works out relationships with client organizations, develops new business, etc.

Stage IV

Provides direction for the organization by:
- "Mapping" the organization's environment to highlight opportunities and dangers.
- Focusing activities in areas of "distinctive competence."
- Managing the process by which decisions are made.

Exercises formal and informal power to:
- Initiate action and influence decisions.
- Obtain resources and approvals.

Represents the organization:
- To individuals and groups at different levels inside the organization.
- To individuals and institutions outside the organization.

Sponsors promising individuals to test and prepare them for key roles in the organization.

From Thompson, P., R. Baker, & N. Smallwood. (1986). Improving professional development by applying the four-stage career model. *Organizational Dynamics*, 15 (Autumn), 53.

At this point, I should concede that my own concept of an IEP is limited by my experience of developing, with the help of many others, an intensive program at Drexel University during the past three years. Drexel is a private university fast internationalizing, partly in order to maintain enrollments. Budget constraints have made the opening of full-time positions in the English Language Center a slow process. Only two of our current staff of 16 instructors are officially full-time. The six persons of our support staff, whom I will refer to as "interns" are all part-time workers with at least a bachelor's degree and either ESL or crosscultural interests. They include a Japanese national working on his doctorate in Educational Linguistics, a master's holder and a master's candidate in Intercultural Communications, and two master's candidates in ESL.

These interns fit well under Stage 1 of the Career Stages schema. Note that Stage 1 incorporates the first professional category, and does not refer to clerical help. In IEPs, they equate to graduate assistants, master's holders who are nonnative speakers, bachelor's holders who want to work with international students, prospective missionaries looking to careers overseas. These very necessary people do work under others' supervision, on others' projects, willingly (one hopes), and often (one knows) under pressure.

The descriptive characteristics under Stage II apply down the line to instructors. As they deepen their knowledge of, and ability in, their classroom duties, they gain a reputation inside the program and out, as other instructors or graduate students ask to observe them. They clearly assume responsibility for a definable portion of the project--say, level two oral skills--work independently, and rely less and less on senior people's direction.

For purposes of the model, I have combined all the senior staff (those with administrative responsibilities) into a joint Stage III/IV since, as a program director, I believe the characteristics under III fit my role as well as those under Thompson's Stage IV. Thus I am a teacher but I must undertake tasks in many areas; I continue to learn about my field and to apply what I learn; I try to stimulate others--not just students--through ideas and information; I hope to act as an idea leader and serve as a mentor; and I work with the outside to benefit the entire staff.

My visual arrangement of these three stages is not in the form of static categories but rather, as a triangular model in which staff development flows in all directions; note,

in Figure 2, that I've even democratically tilted the triangle. Here will be seen in summary form the ways in which participants at each level help those at the other levels--and themselves--grow professionally. The words on the diagram are meant to suggest a great many tasks and activities. Several of these will be identified in the course of the discussion.

It is appropriate to begin with Stage III/IV personnel, because they must of course make it happen. They set the tone for the program and they control the resources. They should have both broader and deeper knowledge of the program's functions and mission. On average, they are older, more secure in their profession, and more certain as to what they can expect from their careers. The point is hardly that staff development does not start from the top, but that it does not end there; it is multilinear.

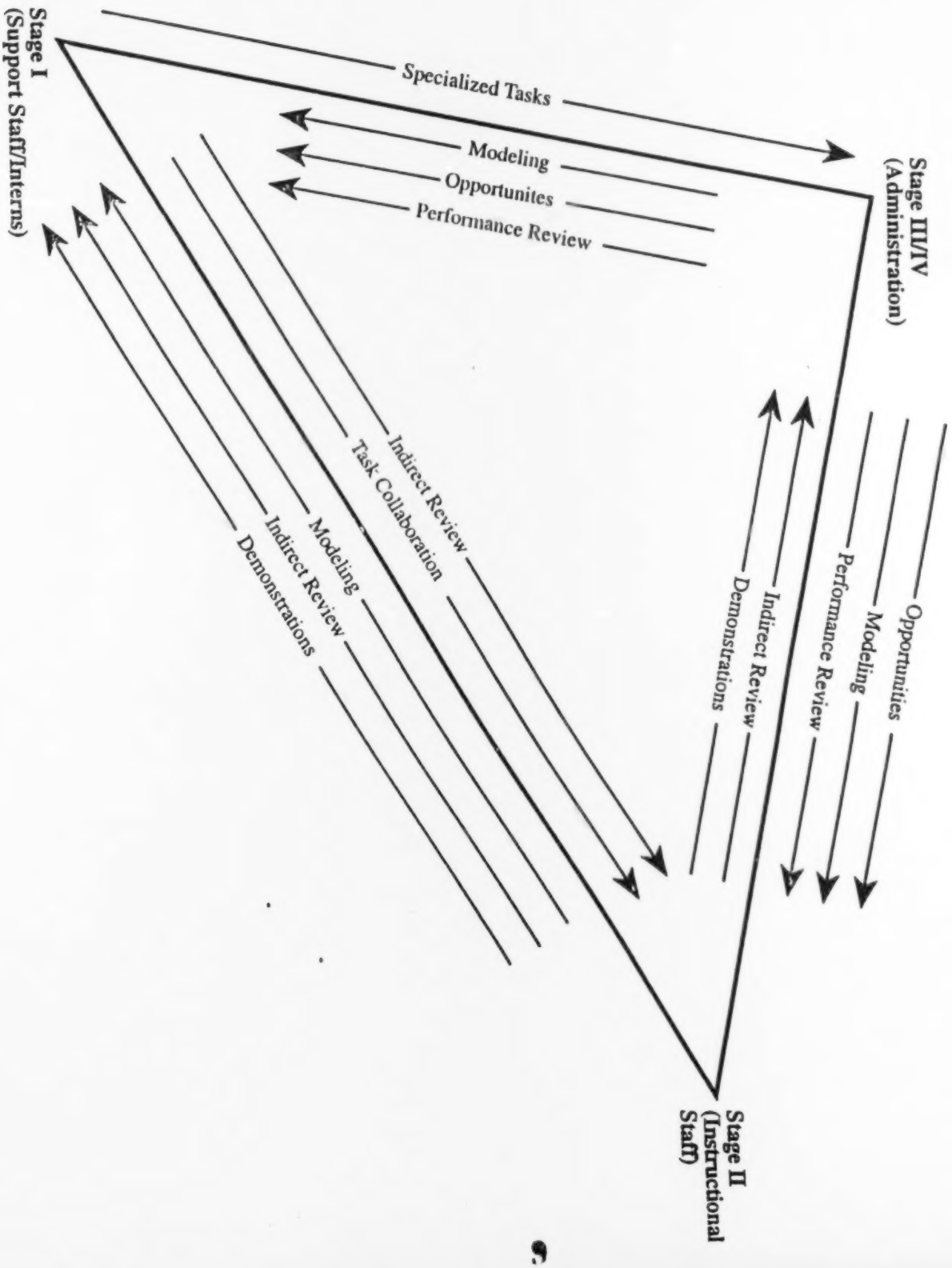
Stage III/IV people can assist the professional growth of Stage II people--the instructors--in three general ways: by (a) providing opportunities, (b) reviewing performance, and (c) modelling professional behavior. These could be called, respectively, the administrative, professional, and personal strategies of staff development. Since they fall into the traditional top-down concept of staff development, no doubt examples come readily to your minds. Opportunities for instructors include training and career counselling sessions, incentives to present papers at professional conferences, released time to develop curricula, terms off to teach overseas, the chance to join a senior person as co-author on a research article. You can fill in the other blanks.

Performance review can be extended beyond the, say, annual sit-down between director and instructor where the latter's work and salary increase are discussed. Classroom observations are also a form of performance review, a point that need not be belabored here. And in fact there are many subtle and informal ways in which instructors can assess and improve their performance--that is, develop professionally--with the help of senior personnel. Discussions with the teaching coordinator about their evaluations from their students is one; another could be a meeting with the director to resolve a student disciplinary case. Viewed as comprising even these tasks, staff development becomes an everyday matter.

Third, modelling appropriate behavior should be seen as a special Stage III/IV obligation. What does it mean, in terms of our comportment, to be an ESL professional

Figure 2:

An Interactive Model of Staff Development



who is by turn teacher, scholar, and administrator of a profit center? Senior staff set an example, good or bad, and junior staff take their cue from it. Probably the most important consideration is the treatment of--and indeed, the attitude toward--the international students who are the program's customers. Professional activity comes close behind, including the maintaining of a teaching schedule, presentations at conferences, and service to professional groups. Thereafter, we might consider work habits, dress, and other aspects of the administrator's presentation of self.

These qualities of leadership apply equally well in the senior staff's role of developing Stage I staff. The opportunities may be somewhat different, particularly if the program has budget constraints. Thus, support staff usually could not expect all-expenses trips to TESOL even if they had their abstracts accepted. More appropriate opportunities would be the chance to observe classes, to lead the conversation class, to set up a conversation partners program, to participate in staff meetings, to give pronunciation tutorials, and so on. These are all at least revenue-neutral and in some cases, revenue-enhancing. They also constitute excellent professional experience for those at Stage I of their ESL careers.

The very breadth of IEP tasks and requirements makes it possible for Stage I personnel to reciprocate--to enhance the director's own professional growth. This function is labeled "Specialized Tasks." The concept proceeds from the belief that It is the rare director, assistant director, or curriculum coordinator who can easily master the nuances of computer programs, accounting processes, marketing strategies, international students' housing needs, meal plan choices, activities events, immigration requirements, insurance plans, and the many other administrative duties of an ESL program. Most of us set up a routine to meet all these functions, and we're naturally slow to alter parts of the routine unless a bright young intern can take a problem in hand and show us a better way.

The interactive model requires this specialization. Stage I persons need not and should not be simply go-fers or people who do whatever has to be done at the moment. Certainly it may be a good thing that all of them can provide walk-in applicants precise information, keep computer records, and make arrangements in the residence halls for a newly-arrived student. They will learn from these tasks, but it is doubtful that they will grow professionally, simply by following a routine handed down to them. The point, then, is to find their special talents and to make each the

responsible person for one aspect of the administrative gamut. This one likes computers and takes over all the data-base entries; that one is an amateur photographer and can be set to work on the new brochure; a third knows the city well and is given responsibilities in the activities program. Ideally, the first then learns to solve the data-base problems, the second comes up with a design for all program literature, and the third soon discovers what outings students like best and contributes significantly to program morale.

Of course there is a risk that one of these interns will perform badly and impair administrative efficiency. But the risk is worth taking, and not simply because the interns will feel challenged and more integral to the program effort. They make senior staff more knowledgeable--about the benefits of certain software, about effective strategies at orientation, about ways to create a winning activities program, and so on. This is not simply delegation of responsibility, but strategies by which newcomers to our field can help those of us in senior positions to stretch ourselves.

If we assume that the Stage III/IV people, despite their administrative burdens, are still teachers and scholars, then they have also much potential for professional enrichment from Stage II people--the instructors. These colleagues may well be more up-to-date in current classroom practices than we are, and they can be our teachers as well as our international students' teachers. One possibility is to ask one or more of our strong instructors to observe us in the classroom, just as we observe them; of course, the status differential will intimidate some, but since we and our observers know that (fortunately) we will not be fired for giving a bad class, their feedback to us may be be carried off with more frank talk than our feedback to them.

I include this activity in the category "Indirect Review" on the diagram. Indirect review also includes program evaluation, discussed at length in Pennington (1991). In that volume, Fox (1991:235) recommends that directors be formally evaluated every three years, and Matthies (1991:244ff.) sets up a list of critical skills and evaluation measures for determining the director's effectiveness within the program itself. An evaluation carried out either by an outside person not beholden to the director (such as a NAFSA consultant) or by instruments that enable program staff to comment anonymously on program leadership, may be the only way to get an honest answer to Matthies' question, "How'm I doin'?"--or as it might be put, "How can I grow?"

The second category of instructor contributions to the director's growth can be summed up in the term "demonstrations." At this point, the value of structure must be acknowledged: The regular staff development day, the encouraged presentations at affiliate conferences, and other set venues where instructors may perform for their peers, are important strategies for mutual professional enrichment. The important thing is that top-down, helping-the-instructor approaches should not be overemphasized; in the Committee on Professional Standards' words, inservice training should be "conducted by members of the regular staff as well by invited trainers from outside." Each member of our IEP staffs probably has, or is developing a unique skill. In the Drexel program, for example, instructors have given demonstrations to the entire staff on the use of computer software in oral skills classes, on process approaches to the teaching of writing, and on drama techniques. You will know colleagues in your own programs who could appreciably enlarge your understanding of certain ESL practices. Perhaps they already have, when you observed them in class. It is likely that you learned as much as they did, for observed classes too are demonstrations, and invariably, they offer us a new perspective on teaching.

Finally, what do our instructors and support staff have to offer one another? The instructors' demonstrations on "Staff Development Day," of course, benefit the interns as much as they do the other staff members. The instructors also model behavior for interns and have perhaps more influence than senior staff: There is no superior/subordinate relationship to complicate matters. Typically, the instructor is only a few years older and demonstrates for the interns a role they expect to play in the near future. An easy mentoring relationship is therefore possible, and it should be taken advantage of.

Various program and professional activities may lead to what I've labeled on the diagram, "task collaboration." Organization, by an instructor and an intern working together, of a student skit for the final party is a minor example. Co-authorship of a paper for presentation at a professional conference is a major example; I have seen such a mutually beneficial collaboration of instructor and intern at a PennTESOL-East conference.

Finally, there is much to be gained from allowing interns to substitute for instructors, on a pre-arranged basis; that is, Jones knows that if Smith is sick, she will take over Level 3 Writing, and she anticipates the event by reviewing the textbook and

syllabus; ideally, she will also be encouraged to observe Smith's class early in the session. The learning experience this apprentice role provides Jones is obvious. It also means that Smith's modus operandi is laid open for inspection by another staff member. Meanwhile, Smith will know soon enough if Jones has performed effectively as a substitute. Thus, each is indirectly reviewing the work of the other, and in optimal conditions, dialog and growth will ensue.

This, then, is the interactive model of staff development. It needs more study and more elaboration, for in the absence of a research base, my evidence is essentially drawn from narrow experience. I offer it as a heuristic that might direct more creative thought to this important component in IEP administration. The time, surely, is ripe. ESL as a profession is certain to be honored more in years to come than it has been to date, and program directors may well be seen as key personnel--true Stage IV persons at financially strapped colleges and universities. As Staczek (1991: 21) has written:

> . . . (O)ur universities have only begun to address the issues of IEP administration and professionalism in the past 2 or 3 years. Perhaps 5 years ago it was not possible to do so because the IEP was not what it is today, a complex academic and administrative entity on a university campus that is concerned with instruction, materials, recruitment, research, finances, employment conditions, image, and professionalism.

Indeed, ESL programs have become large and lucrative, and it is time to consider career stages, career tracks, and staff development in the best sense; ESL is no longer the profession without a career attached.

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